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ABSTRACT

The Institutional Functioning Survey (IFS) is a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire designed to assess how different employee groups at an educational institution perceive their institution. In October 1989, the IFS was distributed to all 63 full-time faculty, 131 part-time faculty, and 12 administrators at the College of the Canyons (CC) in Valencia, California. A total of 73 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 35.4%. The IFS utilizes 132 multiple-choice items to assess the following 11 institutional areas: intellectual and aesthetic stimulation outside of the classroom; academic and personal freedom; human diversity; concern for improvement of society; concern for undergraduate learning; democratic governance; meeting local needs; self-study and planning; concern for advancing knowledge; concern for innovation; and the institutional "esprit," defined as a sense of shared purpose and high morale among faculty and administrators. Results of the survey at CC were compared with a normative group of 21 community colleges nationwide. Study results included the following: (1) the greatest difference between CC and the normative group was on the institutional esprit scale, in which CC showed significantly higher scores; (2) CC also exhibited higher than normative scores in democratic governance and planning; (3) while the human diversity score at CC was lower than the norm, this could be the result of a more homogeneous campus community; (4) full-time faculty at CC gave higher ratings on planning and personal freedom than did part-time faculty; and (5) CC administrators rated democratic governance and innovation more highly than did full-time faculty. (PAA)

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INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

College of the Canyons

INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

Fall 1989

August 1990

Office of Institutional Development
College of the Canyons
Santa Clarita Community College District

JC 930 116

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INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

The Institutional Functioning Inventory (IFI) was distributed to all faculty and administrators at College of the Canyons in early October 1989. The IFI is a self-administered anonymous questionnaire designed to assess how different groups perceive the college. Seventy three (73) responses were received in time to be included in the data analysis.

	DISTRIBUTED	RECEIVED	% RETURN
Full-time Faculty	63	27	42.9%
Part-time Faculty	131	35	26.7%
Administrators	12	7	58.3%
Non-Respondent	-	4	-
TOTAL	206	73	35.4%

The responses were collected and mailed to the Educational Testing Service for processing and analysis. Responses were tabulated and reported as group data.

The IFI provides a means by which a college can describe itself in terms of a number of characteristics judged to be of importance in American higher education. Consisting of 132 multiple-choice items, the IFI yields scores on 11 dimensions or scales, each comprised of 12 items. The titles and definitions of the scales are given on the following page.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ELEVEN SCALES OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

(IAE) *Intellectual-Aesthetic Extracurriculum* refers to the availability of activities and opportunities for intellectual and aesthetic stimulation outside the classroom. Colleges with high scores are characterized by their deliberate efforts to encourage intellectual and artistic interests through appearances by leading intellectuals, informal discussion groups, student literary productions, art exhibits, musical presentations, and so forth. Low scores would mean a relative absence of extracurricular opportunities of an intellectual and aesthetic nature.

(F) *Freedom* has to do with academic freedom for faculty and students as well as freedom in their personal lives for all individuals in the campus community. High scores imply that respondents perceive themselves to be essentially free to discuss topics and organize groups of their own choosing, to invite controversial speakers, and to be relatively free of college restrictions on their personal conduct and activities. Low scores suggest an institution that places many restraints on the academic and personal lives of faculty and students.

(HD) *Human Diversity* has to do with the degree to which the faculty and student body are heterogeneous in their backgrounds and present attitudes. A high score indicates that the college is viewed as having attracted students and faculty of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, of diverse political and religious attitudes, and of diverse personal tastes and styles. A low score suggests a campus community that is relatively homogeneous in terms of faculty and student backgrounds and beliefs.

(IS) *Concern for Improvement of Society* refers to a desire among people at the institution to apply their knowledge and skills in solving social problems and prompting social change. A high score implies that many faculty wish to, and do, consult with governmental agencies on social and economic matters, that programs dealing with contemporary social problems exist on campus, that campus authorities are committed to the view that the institution should be actively engaged in working to improve social conditions. Low scores imply some combination of disinterest, parochialism, or conservatism in relation to the existing social order.

(UL) *Concern for Undergraduate Learning* describes the degree to which the college—in its structure, function, and professional commitment of faculty—emphasizes undergraduate teaching and learning. A high score suggests a faculty generally disposed toward personalized teaching of undergraduates, encouragement of active student involvement in the learning enterprise, and institutional rewards for good teaching. A low score indicates either that undergraduate instruction stands relatively low as an institutional priority, or else the perception that, for whatever reasons, the quality of teaching at the college is generally somewhat poor.

(DG) *Democratic Governance* reflects the extent to which individuals in the campus community who are directly affected by a decision have the opportunity to participate in making the decision. High scores signify extensive and meaningful faculty and student involvement in institutional affairs, decentralized decision making, and shared (horizontal) rather than hierarchical (vertical) organizational arrangements. Low scores suggest authoritarianism—authority and power tightly held, typically by an administrative clique, in a "top-down" administrative framework.

(MLN) *Meeting Local Needs* refers to an institutional emphasis on providing educational and cultural opportunities for all adults in the surrounding area, as well as meeting needs for trained manpower on the part of local businesses and government agencies. High scores indicate availability of adult-education, job-related, and remedial curricula; operation of job-placement and vocational-counseling services; accessibility of the campus to commuters; and so forth. Low scores indicate a low priority, usually reflecting traditional purposes and functions, given to meeting local area needs.

(SP) *Self-Study and Planning* has to do with the importance college leaders attach to continuous long-range planning for the total institution, and to institutional research needed in formulating and revising plans. High scores reflect the perception that long-range planning is a high-priority activity for college officials; that a long-range plan for the institution currently either exists, is being developed, or is being reformulated; and that relevant institutional self-studies are periodically conducted. Low scores indicate a perceived lack of systematic long-range planning and pertinent self-study.

(AK) *Concern for Advancing Knowledge* reflects the degree to which the institution—in its structure, function, and professional commitment of faculty—emphasizes research and scholarship aimed at extending the scope of human knowledge. High scores signify heavy faculty engagement in scientific research, institutional rewards for academic productivity, and high institutional priority for knowledge-producing activities in general. Low scores indicate a low priority, usually reflecting traditional college purposes, given to research and scholarship.

(CI) *Concern for Innovation* refers, in its highest form, to an institutionalized commitment to experimentation with new ideas for educational practice. A high score reflects the view that senior administrators are receptive to new ideas, that people are encouraged to innovate and experiment at all levels, and that significant changes, in the curriculum, for example, have, in fact, been made in recent years. Low scores could imply traditionalism, complacency, or opposition to change in the college community.

(IE) *Institutional Esprit* refers to a sense of shared purposes and high morale among faculty and administrators. High scores reflect a feeling of genuine community (as commitment to shared objectives), loyalty to the institution and satisfaction with its work, open and honest communication among faculty and administrators, and respect for the competency of administrative leaders. Low scores suggest antagonism among and between faculty and administrators, low faculty estimate of the worth of the college, and poor morale in general within faculty and administrative ranks.

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FUNCTIONS AND GOALS

As a device for self-study, the college's scores on the IFI would have meaning only in relation to the institutions' presumed roles and objectives, about which there may or may not be agreement. High scores on all 11 IFI scales would not necessarily be right or good for any college. Only universities granting doctorates would be expected to have high scores on the Concern for Advancing Knowledge (AK) scale.

It may be argued, however, that several of the IFI scales are relevant to the well-being of any college regardless of its mission. In view of the rapid change in society and the changing demands on colleges, many institutions will see the need to change with the times, to continuously renew themselves; the Self-Study and Planning (SP) and Concern for Innovation (CI) scales as basic to the idea of institutional self-renewal. Can any faculty without some minimum of morale, loyalty to the college, and mutual respect (tapped by the Institutional Esprit (IE) scale) be expected to create and maintain sound environments for learning? Finally, almost any college should be expected to provide opportunities for intellectual and cultural stimulation outside the classroom (assessed by the Intellectual-Aesthetic Extracurriculum (IAE) scale). (Institutional Functioning Inventory, Preliminary Technical Manual, R.E. Peterson et.al. 1970.)

COMPARING COC TO OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES

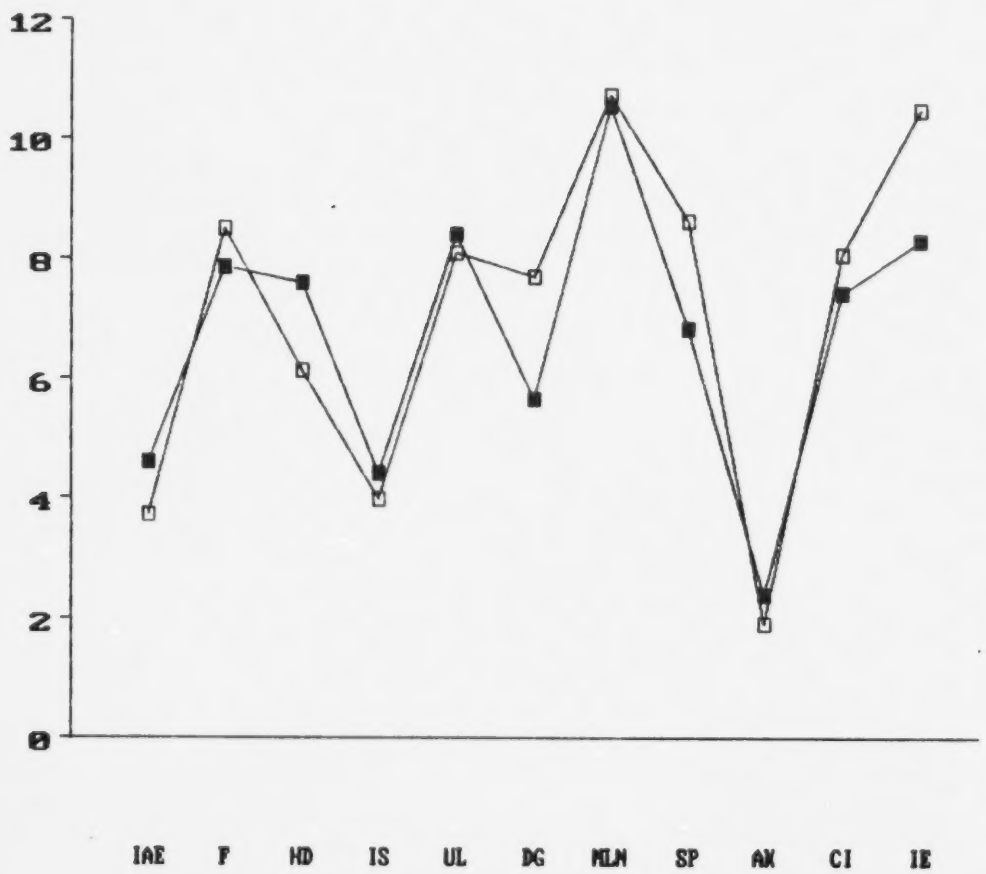
The 73 responses of full-time and part-time faculty and administrators at College of the Canyons were averaged to form an institutional profile across the 11 scales. These collective responses were interpreted against the responses of the normative group of 21 community colleges from across the nation. The results are presented in Figure 1 and Table 1.

The greatest difference can be seen in the Institutional Esprit (IE) scale, with College of the Canyons showing a higher sense of shared purpose and a higher morale among faculty and administrators than other community colleges. High scores reflect a feeling of genuine community, loyalty to the institution and satisfaction with work, open and honest communication among faculty and administrators, and respect for the competancy of administrative leaders.

Figure 1

INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

Comparison of College of the Canyons Scale Mean Scores
to the Average Mean Score for
21 Community Colleges across the Nation



College of the Canyons: N=73 Faculty and Administrators
Comparative Group: N=1,539 Faculty, Administrators and Board Members

TABLE 1

Comparison of College of the Canyons Scale Mean Scores to the Average Mean Score for 21 Community Colleges across the Nation

SCALE	CANYONS	COMPARATIVE	DIFFERENCE
IAE	3.71	4.59	-0.88
F	8.50	7.85	+0.65
HD	6.12	7.58	-1.46
IS	3.97	4.41	-0.44
UL	8.08	8.39	-0.31
DG	7.68	5.64	+2.04
MLN	10.71	10.54	+0.17
SP	8.60	6.81	+1.79
AK	1.90	2.39	-0.49
CI	8.05	7.40	+0.65
IE	10.46	8.27	+2.19

College of the Canyons: N=73 Faculty and Administrators
Comparative Group: N=1539 Faculty, Administrators and Board Members

To know why the college scored high on the scale, it is illuminating to look at the actual percentage of COC respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with several of the items which make up the Institutional Esprit scale.

94% Although they may criticize some things, most faculty seem loyal to the college.

85% The college is currently doing a successful job in achieving its various goals.

84% Generally, top-level administrators here provide effective educational leadership.

Only 14 percent, or 10, of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: Generally, communication between faculty and administration is poor.

The college exhibited a higher score on the **Democratic Governance** (DG) scale. This reflects the extent to which individuals in the campus community who are directly affected by a decision have the opportunity to participate in making the decision.

College of the Canyons also scored higher on the **Self-Study and Planning** (SP) scale than other community colleges. The SP scale has to do with the importance college leaders attach to continuous long-range planning for the total institution, and to institutional research needed in formulating and revising plans. Item analysis showed that 88 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the following statement: Planning for the future of the college is a high priority activity for senior administrators. Eighty-four (84) percent of the respondents said "yes," to the statement: The college has a long-range plan based on a reasonably clear statement of goals. Few of the respondents (8 percent) indicated that there was greater emphasis on departmental planning than on institution-wide planning.

The college's mean score on the **Human Diversity** (HD) scale was lower than the average for the normative group. The HD scale has to do with the degree to which the faculty and student body are heterogeneous in their backgrounds and present attitudes. The lower score suggests that our campus community is more homogenous in terms of faculty and student backgrounds and beliefs than most community colleges.

EXAMINING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FULL AND PART-TIME FACULTY
The 27 responses of full-time faculty were compared to the 35 responses received from part-time faculty, by the average scale scores. The results are presented in Figure 2 and Table 2.

The greatest difference can be seen in the **Self-Study and Planning** (SP) scale, with full-time faculty indicating a significantly higher scale score than that for part-time faculty. A higher score reflects the perception that long-range planning is a high-priority activity for college officials; that a long-range plan for the institution currently either exists, is being developed, or is being reformulated; and that relevant institutional self-studies are periodically conducted. While the 7.3 average scale score for part-time faculty is not below the mid-point on the 12 point scale, the score reflects significant perceptual differences.

The second area where differences exist is the **Freedom** (F) scale. The higher average score for full-time faculty implies that they perceive themselves to be more free to discuss topics and organize groups of their own choosing, to invite controversial speakers, and to be relatively free of college restrictions on their personal conduct and activities than part-timers. The lower average scale score for part-time faculty could well be a product of the limited amount of time they spend on campus.

It is important to note that both full and part-time faculty agree that there is a feeling of a genuine community and a high morale among faculty and administrators (**Institutional Esprit** (IE) scale). There is also strong agreement that there is a relative absence of extracurricular opportunites of an intellectual and aesthetic nature on campus (**Intellectual- Aesthetic Extracurriculum** (IAE) scale).

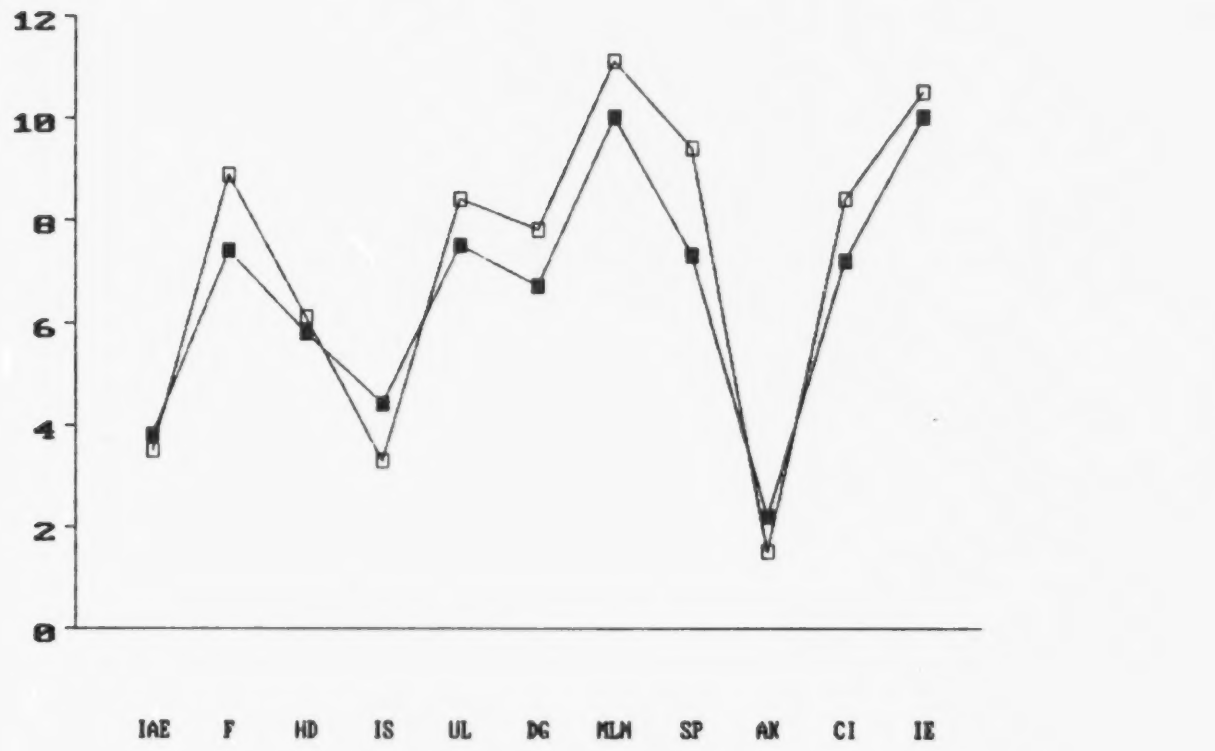
EXAMINING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS
The 7 responses received from administrators were compared to the 27 responses of full-time faculty, by the average scale scores. Full-time faculty were used as the comparative group because of the similarity of their on-campus time commitment. The results are presented in Figure 3 and Table 3.

The greatest difference in mean scale scores was present in the **Democratic Governance** (DG) scale, with administrators exhibiting a higher score than full-time faculty. A high score signifies extensive and meaningful faculty and student

Figure 2

INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

Comparison of Scale Mean Scores of
Full-time to Part-time Faculty



Part-time Faculty: N=35
Full-time Faculty: N=27

TABLE 2

Comparison of Scale Mean Scores of Full-time to Part-time Faculty

SCALE	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	DIFFERENCE
IAE	3.5	3.8	-0.3
F	8.9	7.4	+1.5
HD	6.1	5.8	+0.3
IS	3.3	4.4	-1.1
UL	8.4	7.5	+0.9
DG	7.8	6.7	+1.1
MLN	11.1	10.0	+1.1
SP	9.4	7.3	+2.1
AK	1.5	2.2	-0.7
CI	8.4	7.2	+1.2
IE	10.5	10.0	+0.5

Full-time Faculty: N=27 Part-time Faculty: N=35

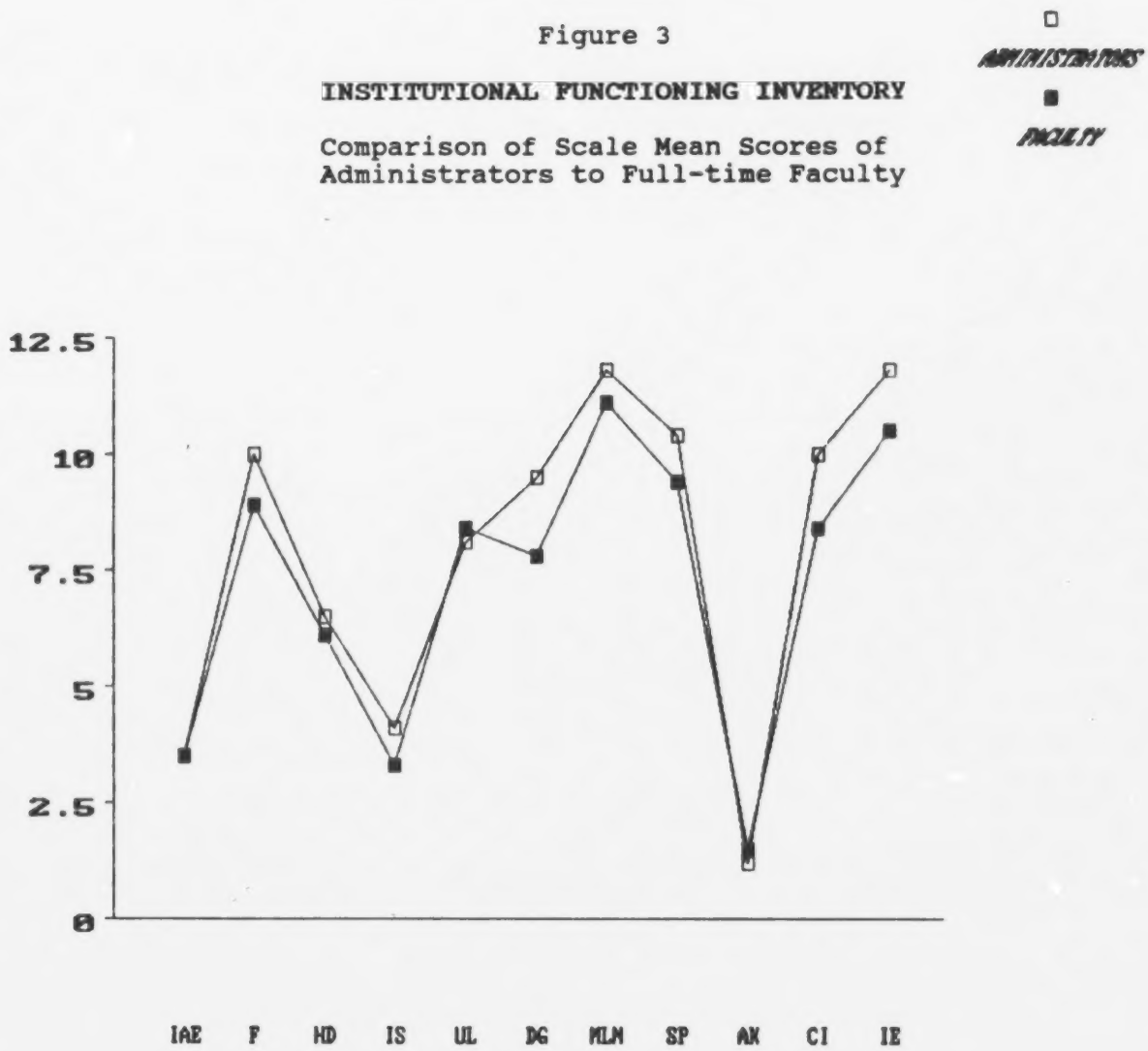
involvement in institutional affairs, decentralized decision-making, and shared rather than a hierarchical organizational arrangement. To illustrate the difference at the item level, while 100 percent of the administrators indicated agreement with the following statement, only 78 percent of the full-time faculty did so - Students/Faculty/ Administrators all have a chance for real involvement in governance.

A second difference occurred on the **Concern for Innovation** (CI) scale, with administrators indicating a higher score than full-time faculty. Interestingly enough, a high score reflects the view that senior administrators are receptive to new ideas, that people are encouraged to innovate and experiment at all levels, and that significant changes have been made in recent years.

Figure 3

INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY

Comparison of Scale Mean Scores of
Administrators to Full-time Faculty



Administrators: N=7
Full-time Faculty: N=27

TABLE 3

Comparison of Scale Mean Scores of Administrators to Full-time Faculty

SCALE	ADMINISTRATORS	FACULTY	DIFFERENCE
IAE	3.5	3.5	0.0
F	10.0	8.9	+1.1
HD	6.5	6.1	+0.4
IS	4.1	3.3	+0.8
UL	8.1	8.4	-0.3
DG	9.5	7.8	+1.7
MLN	11.8	11.1	+0.7
SP	10.4	9.4	+1.0
AK	1.2	1.5	-0.3
CI	10.0	8.4	+1.6
IE	11.8	10.5	+1.3

Administrators: N=7 Full-time Faculty: N=27